

Oregon

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Willamette Valley Habitat Priorities

Biological Description

The Willamette Valley contains globally imperiled oak savanna, oak wetland, upland prairie, and wet prairie habitats which support many at-risk species, including 11 listed species, 2 candidate species, and 5 species of concern. These declining habitat types support unique and significant biological diversity, yet 96% of habitats are in private ownership. Population growth, development pressure, and economic return in the agriculture and forestry sectors will continue to put rare and declining habitats and species at increasing risk in the Willamette Valley. Urban development and expansion of the grape and Christmas tree industries could jeopardize remaining Oregon white oak habitats critical to recovery of listed plant and invertebrate species as well as sustaining populations of resident and migratory songbirds. These potential conflicts also provide the Service with opportunities to provide leadership in the development of broad conservation agreements, safe harbors, and sustainable management planning and restoration.

Key Resource Summary

Focus Habitats:

Oak Woodland & Savanna

Upland & Wet Prairie

Riparian & Floodplain Habitats

Emergent Wetlands

Focus species: Fender's blue butterfly, Oregon chub, Kincaid's lupine, Bradshaw's lomatium, Willamette daisy, Nelson's checkermallow, Taylor's checkerspot, western gray squirrel, steelhead, chinook, and multiple species of declining grassland and oak savanna birds.

Important Factors

The existing Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program is part of a large-scale restoration initiative that enjoys broad-based public support to restore diversity, contribute to recovery of listed species (including potential down and de-listings), benefit key migratory bird habitats, enhance valuable open space, and preserve the character of the Willamette Valley in a manner compatible with its present day uses. PFW staff are involved with broad stakeholder groups including numerous private landowners, locally led watershed councils, non-profit land trusts, SWCD's, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), as well as City and County open space and parks programs. We have agreements with ODFW and Natural Resources Conservation Service to increase our capability to deliver technical assistance and implement restoration projects and conservation programs.

All of the PFW principles are captured within the Willamette Valley focus area. Additionally, most of the potential and existing habitats are on private lands. Partnering opportunities are excellent with requests for technical and financial assistance far exceeding the current level of program funding and staff time. Our involvement with stakeholder groups illustrates that our priorities are shared by many other individuals, agencies, and organizations. The Willamette Valley NWR Complex and Oregon FWO are located within the Willamette Valley; the Refuge has the lead status for delivering Partners projects in the valley.